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C O N F I D E N T I A L CONAKRY 000455

SIPDIS

DEA PARIS FOR HOUSTON, HALEY, HEDRICK  
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TAGS: [SNAR](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [GV](#)  
SUBJECT: GUINEAN GOVERNMENT DESTROYS A REPORTED 34 KILOS OF  
REAL COCAINE

REF: CONAKRY 184

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Kent C. Brokenshire

¶1. (U) On August 20, Guinean security forces torched a reported 34 kilos of cocaine and 680 kilos of cannabis at a public burning covered by the press and diplomatic corps. Security and Civil Protection Minister Mohamed Damba allowed RSO to take random samples from the packets of cocaine slated for destruction. RSO field test determined the substance to be cocaine. The bails of marijuana and packets of cocaine were reportedly seized in different locations around Guinea by various security units including the Presidential Guard, Customs, National Police and the Gendarmes.

¶2. (C) This is the first time the Government of Guinea has burned verified cocaine in a public setting. During a similar burning on May 10, Guinea chief of anti-drug police, Thermite Mara, and police Director General Sekou Bangoura staunchly refused to allow US officials to take a sample of the alleged cocaine, calling the request an affront to 'national sovereignty (Reftel).' A sample later acquired by the Embassy indicated the white substance that was burned was actually laundry detergent.

¶3. (U) The burning allowed the Minister of Security and other officials to denounce the "scourge of cocaine" on national television, something the government has not previously pursued. It also demonstrated that the blatant duplicity of just a few months ago is no longer acceptable in dealing with the international community. On this occasion, the British Ambassador as well as Charges from France and Spain attended the incineration and backed the US request that samples of the cocaine be made available for testing. The amount burned, however, represents an insignificant fraction of the overall tonnage of cocaine that passes through Guinea every year. It is, however, a modest beginning.